On Thursday, December 1, the Inlow Hall atrium filled to capacity. Alumni, friends, students, faculty, and staff looked on from the ground floor and all the balconies. They gathered to hear a big announcement that would have a major impact on the future of the school.

That day, the Indiana University Robert H. McKinney School of Law was born. Amid stirring rounds of applause and multiple standing ovations, the news of Bob McKinney's $24 million gift to our law school will be remembered by all who attended and praised by generations of students, alumni, and faculty to come.

With matching funds from the university, the value of Bob McKinney's $24 million gift to the school tops $31 million. This will mean five endowed professorships, an endowment fund for student scholarships, and a vision for achieving the status of a top 30 law school in national rankings.

Bob McKinney's gift was deeply meaningful on many levels. He credited his "love for this place" to having begun his law school studies, part time, in Indianapolis under the GI Bill in 1949, working, as many students did, and still do, an 8-5 job. When he was called back to active duty for the Korean War and given only six months to report, this meant completing more than 1 and ½ years of study in six months if he was to finish his law degree. He completed his degree by going more than full time in Bloomington, where there were more courses, but his appreciation for the opportunity to begin studies at night school in Indianapolis endured all this time.

Later on, returning to Indianapolis to launch his career in law and banking, Bob McKinney watched our law school graduate thousands of talented students. They went on to prominent roles in every sector of society—government, business, nonprofits. Having been educated in a law school with a long tradition of civic engagement, these alumni tended to become dedicated community volunteers—leaders in the community—whose life and work made a difference to the quality of life in our city.

Bob McKinney's own engagement in civic life is legendary. His gift to our law school is also a gift to the entire community—a perpetuation of the values that guided him. These were elegantly and aptly expressed in the quote from the late Robert F. Kennedy with which Bob closed his remarks at the press conference: "There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why . . . I dream of things that never were, and ask, 'Why not?'"

Although the McKinney gift is the largest ever received by our law school, many other contributors are also advancing the school with gifts—all of which also count toward the overall campus goal of $1.25 billion in the IUPUI IMPACT Campaign.

Former Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn Quayle, have created a scholarship for our law students through an endowed gift of $200,000. The Quayles earned their J.D. degrees here in 1974. They both practiced law in Indiana prior to Dan Quayle's election to the United States Congress in 1976. Marilyn Quayle was a partner with the Indianapolis-based firm Krieg DeVault from 1993 to 2001.

Several alumni and friends have made pledges to the Gerald L. Bepko Chair in Law and to
the Lawrence A. Jegen III Chair in Tax Law. While a portion of Bob McKinney's $24 million gift will provide substantial support for these chairs, others have also been inspired to contribute to honor these two great icons in the history of the law school.

Alumnus Adam Arceneaux and his wife, Margaret, have pledged $25,000 to the Bepko Chair. Adam Arceneaux, a litigation partner at Ice Miller, has said, "I want us to be a destination school for top legal academic talent."

Paul and Lana Kruse, both 1981 alumni, also pledged $25,000 to the Bepko Chair in honor of all Jerry Bepko has done for the law school and IUPUI. Paul has been a partner at Parr Richey Obremeskey Frandsen & Patterson in Lebanon since 1984. Lana has a joint degree in law and business (JD/MBA) and worked at PSI Energy.

Alumnus Steve Stitle and his wife, Elaine, made a $25,000 pledge to the Jegen Chair. Virtually every student has a "Professor Jegen story" from their law school days, Steve has often said. He remembers his former professor as being "caring and compassionate about the development of his students. He really wanted us to learn." Steve is chair of PNC Bank, Indiana. He also held several executive positions at Eli Lilly and Company.

While considerable progress has been made toward the $1.5 million needed to endow each chair, more gifts are needed to reach funding goals. Contact the Assistant Dean for Development in the Robert H. McKinney School of Law, Mark Wunder, at mwunder@iupui.edu, for information on how to contribute to the law school's campaign.

As 2011 comes to a close, my thanks to all of you who support IUPUI. Your gifts have made IUPUI stronger.